

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending further examination. Claim 1 has been amended.

Amendment

Claim 1 has been amended to further clarify the features of claim 1. Claim 1 now recites: "A Multi-Protocol Label Switch (MPLS) processing method applied in a multi-port Virtual Local Area Network (VLAN), wherein the VLAN includes a node with a MPLS table item managing module and the method comprises steps of." Support for these amendments can be found, for example, on page 3, lines 13-23 and page 8, lines 4-6. No new matter has been added.

35 U.S.C. § 101 Rejection

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as directed to non-statutory subject matter. In light of the amendments described above, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-10 as directed to non-statutory subject matter.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application No. 2003/0133412 (Iyer et al.) in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0191572 (Weinstein et al.).

Claim 1 recites the MPLS table item managing module obtains "a specific egress port corresponding to the forwarding-relation table item based upon the next-hop IP address; and accomplishing, by the node in the multi-port VLAN, the MPLS via the specific egress port." In contrast, neither the Iyer et al. application nor the Weinstein et al. application discloses these features. Instead, the Weinstein et al. application discloses a protocol for a single-port VLAN and does not disclose a multi-port VLAN. A single port VLAN differs from multi-port VLAN because, in a multi-port VLAN, several ports are defined as one VLAN. In other words, a multi-port VLAN may contain a plurality of physical ports (*see* page 3, lines 13-24 of pending application and page 1, line 28 to page 2, line 23). Therefore, the "outgoing interface" described

by the Weinstein et al. application can correspond to multiple egress ports in a multi-port VLAN environment. As such, the Weinstein et al. application does not disclose obtaining a specific egress port from a multi-port VLAN.

The Office Action acknowledges that the Iyer et al. application does not disclose these features (see page 3 of December 10, 2008 Office Action).

Furthermore, it would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the Iyer et al. application with the Weinstein et al. application because the Weinstein et al. application discloses a protocol for single port VLAN environments. As explained above, in a multi-port VLAN, the "outgoing interface" can correspond to multiple egress ports and the Weinstein et al. application does not disclose how to determine which egress port corresponds to the "outgoing interface." Thus, it would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the Iyer et al. application with the Weinstein et al. application.

In light of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 as unpatentable over the Iyer et al. application in view of the Weinstein et al. application.

The dependent claims should be patentable at least for the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1. Furthermore, the dependent claims recite additional features that make those claims independently patentable.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

Applicant : Wei Zhu et al.
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Respectfully submitted,

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Lawrence Lu
Reg. No. 60,372

Fish & Richardson P.C.
Citigroup Center
52nd Floor
153 East 53rd Street
New York, New York 10022-4611
Telephone: (212) 765-5070
Facsimile: (877) 769-7945